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Agricultural Memorandum No 495

The best climates for spring sowing in fields with good drainage

L P Smith

Good drainage (Class A in previous Ag Mems) is defined such that the following waiting days or 'delay-days' are needed after a wet spell before cultivations and field work can start in spring.

Previous rain to be drained away	Delay-days
Less than 1 inch	1
Over 1 inch	2

The loss in yield (expressed as a percentage) due to unavoidable late sowing, averaged over a 20 year (1949-68) period for 24 stations, depends on the required work schedule.

The range in losses is as follows:-

	7 day Schedule	10 day Schedule	14 day Schedule
Least	0.3	1.1	3.1
Greatest	3.3	4.4	6.5%

As it is unlikely that drainage could be improved beyond the Class A standard, these losses can be regarded as the minimum, and can only be reduced by reducing the work days required. The Table shows the stations in order of merit for each of the schedules.

Any comments or suggestions on this paper should be referred to the author.

Meteorological Office
Bracknell

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20 year Averages of Yield Loss due to late sowing in good drainage conditions

7-day Schedules		10-day Schedules		14-day Schedules	
Cambridge	0.3	Cambridge	1.1	Cambridge	3.1
Writtle	0.4	Writtle	1.6	Writtle	3.5
Sprowston	0.8	Bedford	2.0	Nottingham	3.5
Maidstone	1.1	Nottingham	2.2	Bedford	3.9
Bedford	1.1	Reading	2.3	Reading	4.0
Oxford	1.1	Watford	2.3	Oxford	4.0
Nottingham	1.2	Oxford	2.3	Watford	4.1
Sandringham	1.3	Maidstone	2.4	Maidstone	4.6
Reading	1.3	Sprowston	2.6	Wimborne	4.6
Holme	1.5	Holme	2.7	Horsham	4.6
Watford	1.5	Sandringham	3.0	Holme	4.8
Melton Mowbray	1.6	Melton Mowbray	3.0	Wisley	4.8
Cranwell	1.7	Wellingborough	3.0	Aylesbury	5.0
Wellingborough	1.7	Wisley	3.0	Wellingborough	5.0
Bishops Cannings	1.8	Wimborne	3.0	Worcester	5.1
Wisley	1.9	Horsham	3.1	Andover	5.1
Wimborne	1.9	Andover	3.2	Melton Mowbray	5.1
Andover	2.0	Cranwell	3.3	Newport	5.5
Horsham	2.1	Bishops Cannings	3.3	Bishops Cannings	5.6
Worcester	2.1	Aylesbury	3.3	Stratford	5.7
Newport	2.5	Newport	3.4	Sprowston	5.8
Aylesbury	2.5	Worcester	3.4	Cranwell	6.1
Stratford	2.8	Stratford	3.9	Cheltenham	6.1
Cheltenham	3.3	Cheltenham	4.4	Sandringham	6.5